

Communicable Disease Service
Vaccine Preventable Disease Program

Childhood Immunization Facts

- Immunization is one of the most effective ways to prevent disease. Vaccine preventable disease levels have been reduced by over 99 percent since the introduction of vaccines.
- Vaccines are safe; 99.9 percent of vaccines administered resulted in no serious reactions or side effects to persons vaccinated
- It is recommended that all children in the United States receive vaccinations against 13 diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type b, pneumococcal disease, varicella, influenza, and hepatitis A (in selected populations).
- Low levels of disease in the U.S. are associated with record high levels of immunization of preschool children. In 2004, approximately 84.1% of New Jersey's two year olds received the basic recommended series of 4 doses of diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis vaccine, 3 doses of polio vaccine, and 1 dose of measles/mumps vaccine. Despite this success, many of New Jersey's toddlers lack one or more doses of this series.
- Children need 80 percent of their vaccinations in the first two years of life, which requires multiple doses of vaccine and about five visits to health care providers.
- New Jersey is one of approximately 25 states, which require health insurance companies to provide childhood vaccines as a covered benefit to policyholder families.
- In 1999, the New Jersey Vaccine for Children (VFC) Program began providing free vaccines to statewide provider sites. Currently, over 1,000 provider sites service eligible children 0-18 years old who are enrolled in Medicaid, KidCare Plans, or have no health insurance.
- A new web based Immunization Registry System has replaced the existing one. The system, known as "NJIIS" (New Jersey Immunization Information System) officially recognized by the Registry Act in 2004, includes improved technology, information updates, new links for users and application/technical helpdesk support.

- NJIIS also offers providers more complete immunization histories, color coded schedules for shots received/shots due, an automated reminder/recall feature, enhanced ability to access provider immunization coverage rates, customized reports for users, and multiple interfaces with Electronic Birth Certificates (EBC), the Child Lead Program, Automated Health Systems and others.
- Providers can begin using the new system upon completion of a provider profile and training sessions on the NJIIS system.
- New Jersey and 49 other states have immunization requirements for children entering day care and school; there are no such laws assuring that all children are up-to date on their shots by age two.
- A major cause of the 1991 measles epidemic in New Jersey was the failure to vaccinate children on time at 12-15 months of age. Of preschool-aged children aged 12 months to 5 years old contracting measles, 70 percent were unvaccinated.
- Many years of experience and careful research have shown that vaccines used for routine childhood immunizations can be given together safely and effectively.
- Pertussis (whooping cough) incidence has increased since the 1970's despite the widespread vaccination of children. Adolescent and adult patients often transmit the illness to young children and to infants who may not yet be fully protected.
- Evidence based research suggests that adolescent booster immunization for pertussis, tetanus, and diphtheria is a highly cost-effective public health intervention.
- Immunization is one of the most cost effective medical interventions available.